

Child Support Digital Marketing Demonstration Project

Final Brief

GOAL:

To increase child
support enrollments

INTERVENTIONS:

Facebook Sponsored
Advertising, Peachjar
Email, Streaming iHeartRadio
Advertising

COUNTIES ENGAGED:

Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish,
Spokane, Thurston, Whatcom, Yakima

MARKETING CONSULTANT:

Spearca Communications

EVALUATION PARTNER:

Center for Policy Research

Key Findings



Digital marketing elicits responses, shares new information and attracts website interactions from individuals mostly new to child support services.



Memorable web addresses or durable content (email) **promotes engaged, repeat visits**, encouraging viewers' visits on their own initiative.



Enrolling in child support is a multistep process and **responses to digital marketing could form an important first step** and prompt repeat visits to webpage.



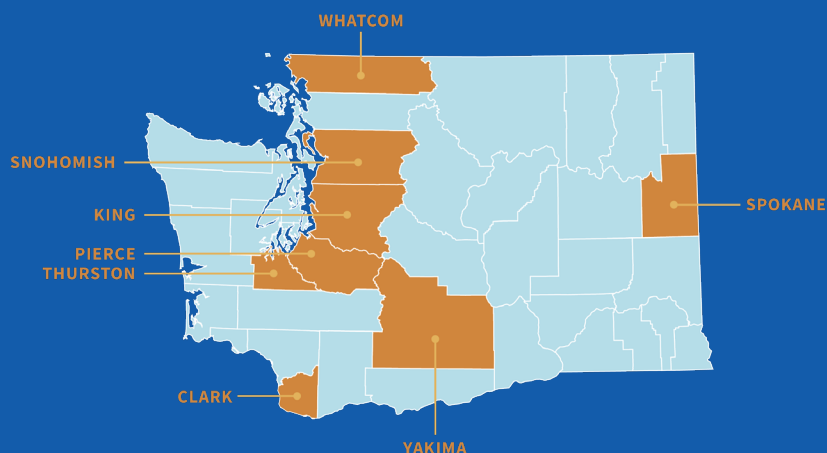
Straightforward, informative content on how child support services can help parents provide for their children is useful.



Digital marketing is most effective when advertisements link to accessible, informative and easy to navigate website resources.

Washington Division of Child Support (DCS) selected **eight counties** with lower participation rates in child support services as the geographic targets for the digital marketing project.

Representing both urban and rural areas, the counties participating included Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Whatcom and Yakima.



Overview

The Digital Marketing grant, sponsored by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, is a 24-month demonstration project with the goal of researching how digital marketing may help the child support program more effectively reach and serve families.

In September 2018, OCSE awarded funds to 14 child support agencies to test digital marketing approaches and partnerships to reach parents that could benefit from child support services, and/or to create or improve two-way digital communication and engagement.

Approach

DCS tested three different types of digital marketing platforms: social media, email, and streaming radio. Advertising content drew on existing brand messages, augmented by research suggesting ads should provide straightforward, positive information describing DCS as a helpful, family-focused agency. The ads asked probing questions and gave information on how child support services could help the parent support their children.

Sensitive to the often challenging circumstances surrounding the need for child support, the ads positioned DCS' services as a transactional financial resource free of parenting advice or judgement.

The first two interventions targeted single parents within areas in the counties with the lowest participation rates in DCS services. The performance of different creatives was tested against one another. The third intervention used one creative to test the previous targeting strategies against areas with high levels of existing DCS participation.

An advertisement for the Washington State Department of Social & Health Services' Division of Child Support. It features a smiling woman and a young girl in a field. The text reads: "Need a boost to support your family?" "Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' Division of Child Support **can help.**" "We work to make sure all kids have regular financial support from both parents." "Take the first step for your family. Contact DCS now." "dshs.wa.gov/dcs/enroll" "1-800-442-KIDS".

Need a boost to support your family?

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' Division of Child Support **can help.**

We work to make sure all kids have regular financial support from both parents.

Take the first step for your family. Contact DCS now.

dshs.wa.gov/dcs/enroll

1-800-442-KIDS

Interventions

1

FACEBOOK SPONSORED ADVERTISING

APRIL 16 – JUNE 28, 2019

Targeted to women aged 30 – 45 in 59 zip codes

Reach 62,962 individual newsfeeds

Impressions 620,840

Tested two creatives

Cost per individual reached \$.10

Cost per click \$2.68

facebook

Facebook is the most popular social media platform among adults worldwide. According to a 2018 Pew Research Center report, two-thirds of all American adults use Facebook. What sets Facebook apart as a social platform is its ability to provide a sense of community for users.

2

PEACHJAR EMAIL

SEPTEMBER 29 – DECEMBER 31, 2019

Targeted to parents in 100 elementary schools in 29 zip codes

Reach 51,142 parent email accounts

Impressions 152,230 emails

Tested three creatives

No cost for agencies serving children



Peachjar is a digital flyer platform used by thousands of K-12 schools nationwide. Peachjar partners with schools to tailor weekly email messages to parents that include school news as well as information on services and activities of interest to parents. These flyers are branded by the advertiser and delivered to parents from their student's school email address. Each school district approves the flyer content and is responsible for distributing it to schools.

3

STREAMING IHEARTRADIO

AUGUST 3 – OCTOBER 11, 2020

Targeted to women aged 30 – 45 in 60 zip codes

Streams 488,865

Tested one creative in two target groups

Cost per impression \$.01

Cost per click \$7.03



Streaming radio provides an opportunity to reach a captive audience interacting with the medium on any device (desktop, laptop, tablet, or phone). iHeartMedia's streaming service and app, iHeartRadio, has 128 million registered users. On average, listeners spend 31 minutes each day engaged with the streaming service and app.

Outcomes

RESPONSES

All three interventions elicited viewer responses (clicks/interactions) which referred viewers to the Enroll for Child Support or Modify Child Support webpages. The advertisements' click through rates (clicks/impressions) ranged from .3% to .6%.

CREATIVES

The two creatives used in the Facebook intervention performed similarly. Two of the Peachjar flyers evoked comparable responses, but the third did not perform as well. Instead of asking a probing question, the third flyer headlined a general statement about children, which was not as effective. The image used in this flyer featured a father and child instead of a mother or children by themselves, which also may have been a factor in its performance.

WEBSITE ACTIVITY

All three interventions increased activity on the Enroll for Child Support Services webpage, accounting for 2 to 19 percent of sessions.

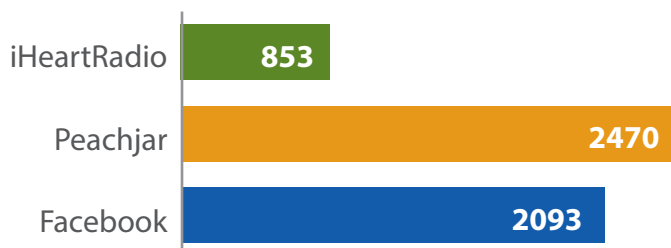
NEW CHILD SUPPORT ENROLLMENTS

During the Facebook and iHeartRadio interventions, the rate of new enrollments in the intervention areas decreased less than in the state as a whole. New enrollments in the areas targeted during the Peachjar intervention decreased slightly, while enrollments increased statewide.

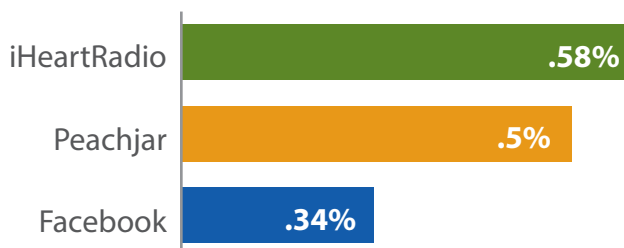
DIFFERENCES IN TARGET GROUPS

The iHeartRadio intervention compared enrollments and responses from two groups – one with high rates of existing DCS clients and the other with low rates of participation. The higher participation areas had more new enrollments, more previous experience with child support and found the process of enrolling easier than the other group. Responses suggest new enrollees from areas with low existing DCS participation must overcome a lack of information and challenges in accessing resources when applying for child support services.

CLICKS/INTERACTIONS BY INTERVENTION



CLICK THROUGH RATE (CTR) BY INTERVENTION



CHANGES IN NEW ENROLLMENTS

Comparison of Intervention Periods to Previous Year

	STATEWIDE	TARGETED AREAS
Facebook	-6%	-1%
Peachjar	4%	-1.50%
iHeartRadio	-20%	-16%

DIFFERENCES IN TARGET GROUPS DURING THIRD INTERVENTION

	HIGH PARTICIPATION	LOW PARTICIPATION
Change in new enrollments	-13%	-22%
Found enrollment process easy	77%	33%
Previous experience with child support	49%	22%
Visited website before enrolling	60%	41%

Lessons Learned

Digital marketing has clear value for informing and engaging prospective and current child support enrollees. Digital marketing is an easy and inexpensive method for child support agencies to deploy in their efforts to increase enrollments and interact with current clients. Adequate human and organizational resources are required to initiate, manage and respond to digital marketing efforts, particularly in a system unaccustomed to these efforts.

For some, gathering the information and resources necessary for enrolling child support is a relatively easy process. **Digital marketing directed to this population could influence the timing or execution of an already existing plan to enroll in services.** Others lack information about available services and supportive resources available for the enrollment process. **For this group, digital marketing plays a valuable role in creating awareness of available services and may prompt the first step the decision to apply for services.**



Washington kids deserve bright futures

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' Division of Child Support can work together with you to:

- Establish parentage (fatherhood)
- Locate the other parent
- Create a support order
- Collect support
- Change an order

See how we can help you today.

dshs.wa.gov/dcs/enroll

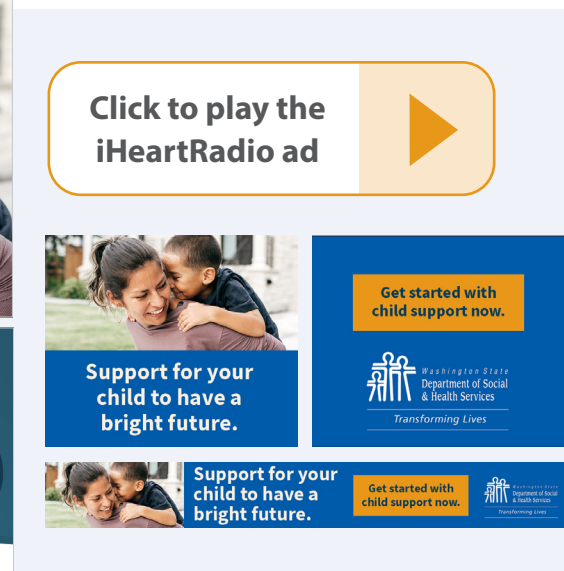
1-800-442-KIDS



Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
Transforming lives

- ✓ **Establish** Parentage
- ✓ **Create** a Child Support Order
- ✓ **Collect** Child Support
- ✓ **Change** an Order

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
Transforming lives



Click to play the iHeartRadio ad

Support for your child to have a bright future.

Get started with child support now.

Support for your child to have a bright future.

Get started with child support now.

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
Transforming Lives

Each digital marketing platform offers unique opportunities and challenges, and expectations for outcomes should align accordingly. For example, Facebook advertising allows for specific targeting and wide reach but prompts only brief engagement. By contrast, durable messaging like the flyers used in Peachjar or the memorable webpage address in iHeartRadio, encourages fewer, but better engaged viewers/listeners.

Throughout the digital marketing project, updates to the DCS website were made to support the interventions and general navigational ease. These updates, while relatively minor, made a big impact in how users engaged with the website. For example, a callout box was added to the DCS website to direct viewers to the *Enroll for Child Support Services* webpage. Transitions from the DCS homepage increased three-fold after this change was made.



COVID-19 Adjustments

The COVID-19 pandemic upended plans for the iHeartRadio intervention and business as usual for DCS. Offices closed to the public, eliminating an important resource for submitting new enrollment applications and likely leading to a decrease in new enrollments.

The intervention was delayed from April to August, but this time was well spent to develop and deploy new enrollment resources. A website instructional video on completing the application forms was created and viewed 495 times, and a new option to request mailed application forms prompted 995 requests. The radio script was updated and rerecorded to acknowledge the uncertainty of the times. Across the state, new enrollments decreased 20 percent compared to the same period in 2019, suggesting the pandemic did indeed impact new enrollments.

More Information

DCS' digital marketing project's evaluation reports, briefs and standard operating procedures are available to provide more in-depth information. Visit centerforpolicyresearch.org or click on the item below.

SUMMARY BRIEFS

[Facebook](#)

[Peachjar](#)

[iHeartRadio](#)

EVALUATION REPORTS

[Facebook](#)

[Peachjar](#)

[iHeartRadio](#)

OPERATING PROCEDURES

[Facebook](#)

[Peachjar](#)

[iHeartRadio](#)